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Home Furnishing Helps

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Agricultural Extension Service
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



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4-H Home Furnishing Helps

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WE ARE ALL interested in making our homes more attractive and livable. Sometimes this may be achieved through rearranging furniture, redecorating walls, or refinishing old chairs. Rooms may be made more cheerful with a simple homemade shelf, table, lamp, or slip cover. Whichever you do, your completed work should contribute toward making your home a more comfortable, pleasant place for you and your family.

SUGGESTED UNITS

The following units serve as a guide in determining what might be included. Any three articles may form a unit. These articles may be either made or refinished.

1. Dressing table, stool, and an accessory such as rug, draperies, mirror, scarf, lamps, or covered boxes.
2. Chest, wall hanging or mirror or picture, and accessories such as lamp, scarf, and rug.
3. Desk or study table, chair, and lamp or accessory such as blotter set, book ends, picture, wall hanging.
4. Draperies, curtains, and picture or foot stool.
5. Bedspread, draperies or curtains, quilt or rug, and picture.
6. Slip covers for chair and davenport, and unit accessories such as picture, hanging bookshelf, rug, lamp.
7. Bookcase, picture, book ends.

COLOR IN HOME FURNISHINGS

Kind and amount of color depend upon the exposure, the size and shape of the room, and the type of furniture.

Exposure of Room: For north or east rooms or those receiving little light, the warm colors such as yellow, yellow ivory, beige, tan, rust or red are best to use. The west and south rooms usually have more light. Here cool colors, those related to blue and green, are most pleasing.

In working out the color scheme, it is well not to use more than three colors in one room. It will add interest to select one contrasting cool color to use in a room where warm colors predominate, and some contrasting warm color where cool colors prevail. In a good color scheme there is always one color which is outstanding. It is best to have the large areas such as the walls, ceiling, and heavy pieces of furniture a soft restful color, using the brighter colors for accents in trimmings and designs of the smaller articles.

Pattern: If there is a definite figure in the wallpaper, it is wise to use plain materials in the curtains or upholstery. If the walls are plain and there is little or no pattern otherwise in the room, it would be desirable to have a pattern in the draperies, furniture covering, or some of the other articles you are planning to make.

FURNITURE

Arrangement of Furniture: Four rules for the arrangement of furniture are:

1. Keep it simple.
2. Make it convenient.
3. Plan for comfort.
4. Work for balance.

Plan the arrangement of the furniture to accommodate the family's activities. Here are a few suggestions for making your home more attractive and livable.

1. Crowded rooms seem small. Sort out the furniture and move some to another room, if necessary.

2. Large rooms with not much furniture seem smaller and cozier if furniture is moved out away from the wall.

3. Furniture placed cater-cornered makes a room look busy and small. Such a room is also more difficult to clean.

4. If wall space is limited, set desks and larger tables at right angles to the wall or to a window.

5. Keep center of room clear.

6. Hang pictures, shelves, etc., to form a unit with a furniture grouping.

7. Move the chairs away from the wall and group with other furniture.

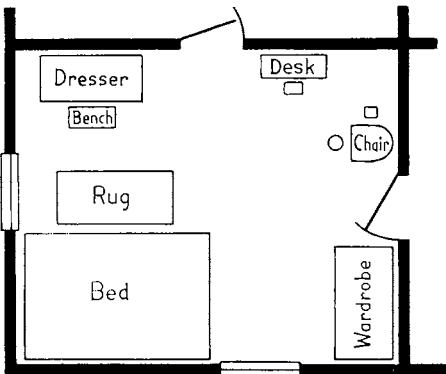
8. Arrange large pieces of furniture so that the room appears well balanced.

Care and Repair of Furniture: By keeping our furniture in good repair, we can make our homes more attractive, give a lift to morale, and save money. Here are some helpful aids.

If scratches appear on furniture: Apply a small amount of walnut oil stain to scratches with a pad of soft cloth. With a clean cloth polish the entire piece. Oil stain polishes as well as conceals.

If fingerprints, foggy finishes, general soil appear: Wash the furniture with warm soapsuds, then wipe with a cloth wrung out of clean water. Wipe with dry cloth. Apply a coat of polish. A good polish for oiled or varnished furniture consists of equal parts (one-fourth cup of each) of vinegar, boiled linseed oil, and turpentine. Put in a glass jar and shake until it is blended. Apply a very little on a clean cloth. Rub well into the furniture. Polish with a clean cloth.

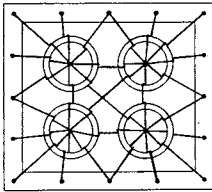
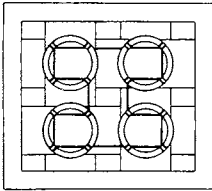
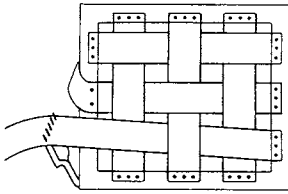
If napped upholstery fabric becomes soiled: Dissolve one-fourth cup of mild soap flakes in four cups of water. Add a tablespoon of household ammonia and cool the solution. When ready to use, put one-half cup of the solution in a large bowl and beat up a dry suds with an egg beater. Apply the suds with a brush or toweling to the upholstery in small areas at a time and scrub well. Rinse with a cloth wrung out of warm water and then rub with a dry soft cloth. Caution: Check material for color fastness in an inconspicuous place. Don't get upholstery fabric any wetter than you can help.



Well-balanced furniture arrangement

If springs come untied, the stuffing wads, or the webbing breaks: Dismantle the chair by removing the gimp, outer and inner covering, and padding. Remove the springs and start from the beginning.

1. Retack webbing. Fold and tack one end of webbing with three tacks. Using a web stretcher, pull opposite end as tight as possible and fasten with two or three tacks. Turn end back and fasten it down with two or three more tacks.



Repairing springs

Top: Stretching and tacking webbing
Middle: Springs sewed to webbing
Bottom: Each spring tied eight times

2. Sew on the springs as shown in center diagram.
3. Tie the springs. Tie a knot in one end of a piece of stitching twine. Tack down through the knot at one corner of frame. Draw twine

diagonally across the spring, working toward you. Press the spring down even with the sides of the chair, and holding the twine firmly in place along the outer edge of the spring nearest the corner, tie a figure eight knot. Pull twine across the spring and tie in the same manner. Continue to next spring and so on to the opposite corner where a knot is tied and tacked securely to frame. Tie springs diagonally both ways. Tie them in the same manner lengthwise and crosswise so that each spring is tied eight times.

4. Cover springs with feed sack or muslin. Tack to frame.
5. Pad well. If old stuffing is used, it should be shaken and aired. Sew it in place to the muslin covering and the springs, using a curved needle.
6. Cover padding with upholsterer's cotton and tack securely at edge of frame.
7. Cover padding with unbleached muslin or sacks before recovering or slip covering the entire piece of furniture.

If old wood finish is marred and worn: If the article has the three essentials of good furniture—good wood, good lines, good construction—it is worth while to refinish it. Time, patience, and much work are required.

1. Apply a commercial varnish remover following the instructions on the container. If desired, use a home-made varnish remover made from three tablespoons lye and one quart of thick laundry starch. Apply with a fiber brush such as a vegetable brush to the surface from which old finish is to be removed. Allow to stand a few moments until the varnish loosens or can be removed easily with a putty knife. After removing the old finish, wash thoroughly with turpentine or light vinegar.

2. Remove stains with oxalic acid solution. Dissolve in a pint of water 10 cents worth of oxalic acid crystals purchased at the drugstore. Apply to the stain and let stand until dry. This solution is poisonous so be sure to wash your hands after using it.

3. Fill nail holes, gouges, and other similar mars with plastic wood or stick shellac. Let dry thoroughly before sanding.

4. When dry, sand until clean and smooth. Sand with grain of wood. Use in this order—sandpaper No. 1, No. 0, No. 00. Dust.

5. Wash with turpentine to remove all dust. Dry.

6. For walnut, maple, birch, or pine apply six or seven coats of boiled linseed oil. Let each coat dry two or three days. Rub lightly with fine steel wool before applying the next coat. Steel wool the last coat until satiny.

7. For oak or any woods not listed above, apply one coat of best varnish obtainable. Let dry 48 hours. Sand lightly before applying the second coat. Let dry and then rub down with a cloth pad dipped first in linseed oil and then in powdered pumice.

If you prefer blond furniture, follow steps 1 to 5 inclusive, then continue with step 8.

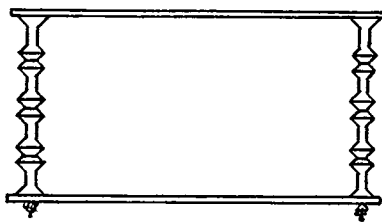
8. Thin a white semigloss paint one half with turpentine. Paint on furniture surface and wipe off excess paint immediately.

9. Let dry 24 hours. Apply finish as in step 7.

In applying paint to furniture, follow carefully the instructions on the container.

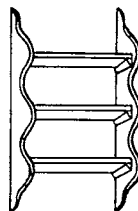
HOMEMADE FURNITURE

Spool Shelves: The number of spools to be used will depend upon the available space. Plain boards may be finished the same as the spools. The spools and the boards may be held together



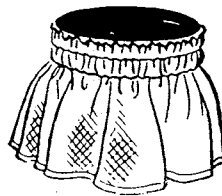
Shelf made from spools and two boards

with rods or ropes which must be small enough to go through the spools. The rack may be hung by means of heavy picture hooks. Book shelves or knickknack shelves may also be made.



Homemade shelf for books or knickknacks

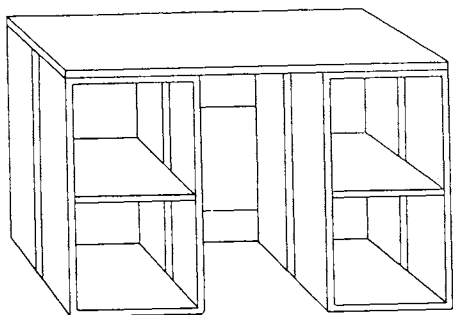
Stools: Cheese boxes and butter tubs make good materials for stools. They serve as chairs as well as storage places. The box may be covered with small prints in chintz or cotton prints. One simple method is described here.



Cheese-box stool

To make the cover for the stool, cut a circle of material at least six inches greater in diameter than the cover of the box. This allows enough material to tack the edges down securely to the cover. The skirt is made from a strip of material two yards long and as wide as the box is high plus the

width of a narrow hem at the top and a wider hem at the bottom. The skirt may be either pleated or gathered to fit the box. A band to cover the pinning of the skirt and cover is cut lengthwise or crosswise of the material. It should be at least one-half inch wide after both edges have been folded in and as long as the circumference of the box. Tack the skirt and band in place at the top edge of the cover with upholstery tacks.



Dressing table made from orange crates

A Dressing Table may be made by using two orange crates, firmly supported by two boards nailed across the back, one at the top and the other at the bottom. A straight board or a shaped board the width of the crates forms the table top. The boxes should be sanded and painted. The dressing table skirt may be either plain or figured. Good materials are seersucker, prints, glazed chintz, unbleached muslin, or feed sacks. They may be pleated or gathered into a straight band and

snapped to the table with tape fasteners. A spring curtain rod may be used to attach the skirt to the table.

A triangular dressing table is easy to make and utilizes a corner of the room. A shelf dressing table is also easily made and provides more space. A drawer under the shelf is desirable.

The mirror for the dressing table should be of good clear glass. It may be either unframed or in a simple frame of wood. The size of the mirror should be in proportion to the table. Hang the mirror so that the wire and hooks do not show. A triple mirror that can stand on the table is also practical.

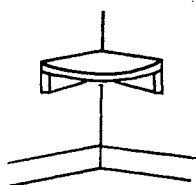
A cheese box stool or low back chair covered with the same material as the dressing table skirt makes an attractive dressing table seat. Or a plain bench may be padded and covered with a contrasting or harmonizing material.

ACCESSORIES

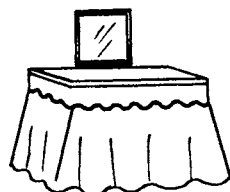
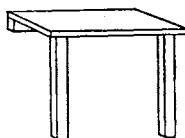
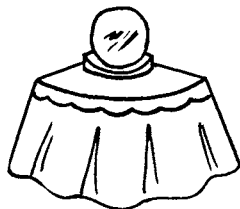
Accessories can add that special touch and often can be made from things on hand.

Curtains and Draperies: Curtains and draperies are used to add beauty, to give privacy, and to modify light. Glass curtains, which are hung next to the glass, made of dotted swiss, theatrical gauze, scrim, or dimity may be used in the living room and bedrooms. Prints in small design may be used in the kitchen.

Draperies may be used with or without glass curtains. Try gay dress prints, checkered or plaid gingham, seersucker,

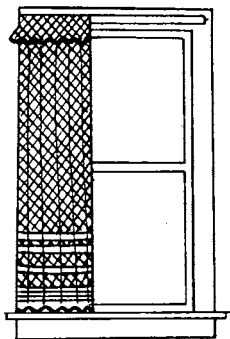


Triangular dressing table



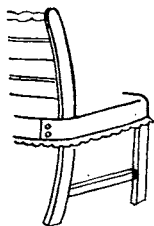
Shelf dressing table

figured or gayly-colored feed sacks, or unbleached muslin trimmed with bias tape, rickrack, or yarns of contrasting color. Monk's cloth can also be used. White muslin ruffles may be used on printed material, printed ruffles on plain material, or bands of contrasting material or bias tape for color accents.



Sill-length curtain with bands of contrasting color

Plan for a one-fourth-inch hem at each side, a two-inch hem at the bottom, and a one-inch casing plus a one-inch heading at the top. Make them sill or apron length, and wide enough to hang in soft folds.



Fitted chair cover with snaps

Chair Covers: Use a gay-colored dress print, printed or colorful feed sacks, or a small-patterned, attractive cretonne. Cut pattern the shape of the chair seat, cutting out for arms and splats as necessary.

Use a straight piece of goods for apron—extending side pieces to a

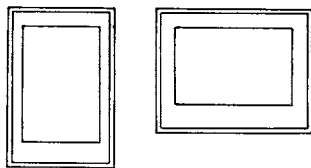
length long enough to tie on or snap around and onto back.

Use a pleated flounce, ruffle, or cord-ing to finish bottom edge. Make a simple, fitted slip for chair back.

Lamps: Choose lamp bases that are in good proportion to surface on which they are used. Choose a plain but colorful base.

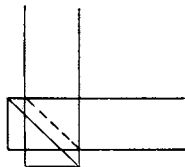
Shades should be light in color and heavy enough so the shape of the bulb does not show through when lighted. They should be simply made and easily cared for.

Pictures: Select subjects with character and interesting color schemes. Frames should be simple. Well-planned margins always add to the beauty of a picture. Pictures should be hung at eye level (to a person standing) and hung over a furniture grouping. Wire or hooks should not show.



Well-planned margins for pictures

Braided Rugs: Use only wool that is past using for any other purpose, or use firm cotton material. Choose rich harmonizing colors.



Joining strips with a bias seam

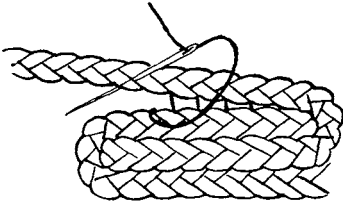
Cut strips two inches wide. Fold like double bias tape and press or baste. Join strips with a bias seam.



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Braid firmly with a folding rather than a pulling motion.

Weave or sew braids together with a strip of material or with carpet warp or heavy cord—using a slip stitch through strands.



Sewing braids together, using a slip stitch

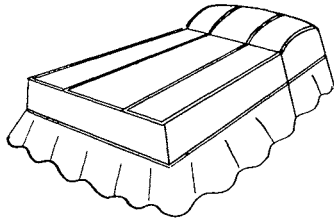
Finish off strip of one color before starting a new one by weaving ends through braid. Start new color at a different place on the rug than where previous strip ended.

Table Covers: Table covers should harmonize or blend with the wood finish. White or bright covers do not blend too well. Keep them simple. Avoid too much embroidery, fringe, and shiny material.

The shape of the cover should harmonize with the shape of the surface of the table.

Covers should not be so long that they hang over the ends of tables; neither should they be placed corner-wise.

Spreads: The spread should be suitable to the room and the personality of the owner. Select materials simple and easy to launder. If you buy them, select cotton crash, seersucker, tufting, or unbleached muslin. Heavy, rough material such as osnaburg, monk's cloth, and homespun are suitable for a day bed or a boy's room. Indian head, rep, checked gingham, dress prints, muslin, and seersucker are good for the average room. Bedspreads should be heavy enough to stay in place and should cover the mattress, springs, and pillows.



Bedspread with seaming as part of design

Plan them so that the necessary seaming becomes a part of the design. To avoid a center seam, one width of material may be used for the center panel, with the other widths sewed to each side. For trim, bands of contrasting or matching material, applied motifs, cording, binding, tufting, ruffles, and scallops may be used. The plain, tailored spread is also attractive.

Reprinted June 1948

UNIVERSITY FARM, ST. PAUL 1, MINNESOTA

Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, University of Minnesota, Agricultural Extension Division and United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating, Paul E. Miller, Director. Published in furtherance of Agricultural Extension Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914.

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